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R O N E Y

G E N E O L O G Y

the story of

Captain John Otto Roney

and

Harriet Burnham Robinson

of

Thomaston Maine

& their descendents

First Edition

Copyright 1947
by the author

John Roney Grindell

published by

EASTERN MAGAZINE AGENCY
23 Aborn Street
Providence 3 R.I.

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INTRODUCTION

Generations to come will probably carry Roney blood; but the name may vanish into history, certainly no future descendent of this line can carry Roney as a family name.

This history covers the 131 years of the Roney Family, from the birth of John Roney, Feb. 26,1816, to the completion of the manuscript for this book on Feb. 26,1947. Some statements conflict with other sources (Eaton's "Annals of Warren"; Thomaston Town Records; & Rockland, Me., "Courier-Gazette"); but this text is based on later evidence, & is believed to be more accurate.

Of the 26 biographies included, 16 people are of Roney blood; the remaining 10 persons married into the family. A study of this group shows a succession of happy marriages; without a divorce, or remarriage. Only one died young. The men spent the major part of their working life employed by others. The male Roneys had thin beards; & married, without exception, between the ages of 26 - 32. John Roney, & his two sons, were mariners, & excellent singers; but the following generations of males were not seafarers, & had very poor singing voices. John Roney I is presumed to have had little formal education; but, in the American way of life, each succeding generation had more schooling than the preceding generation; & the great grandchildren are all college graduates, & two have master degrees.

The following abbreviations are employed:

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&	and	grad.	graduate of
b.	born	m.	married
bur.	buried	Me.	all places are in Maine, unless otherwise stated
chil.	children		
d.	died	res.	resides, or resided
dau.	daughter	Thom.	Thomaston, Maine

Today falls within the era of interim committees, & interim reports. This geneology is one of the latter. When printing & binding costs are very much lower, a second edition, with considerably more detail, & numerous illustrations, may be published in a more attractive form. A limited edition of 30 copies of this book has been printed.

The author appreciates the assistance of members of the family in patiently answering innumerable questions.

Rec'd May 2-1979

CHART OF THE FAMILY LINEAGE

- JOHN RONEY I (1) married Harriet Robinson (2)
  - NELSON (3) married C. Keough (4)
  - JOHN II (5) married C. Oliver (6)
    - ORRA (12) married M. Beverage (13)
      - JEANETTE (18) married E. Pero (19)
        - JANE (24)
        - ERNESTINE (25)
        - EDWARD (26)
    - ELLA (14) married R. Edgett (15)
    - CECILIA (16) married H. Grindell (17)
      - JOHN (20) married D. Croteau (21)
      - DAVID (22)
      - PRISCILLA (23)
  - ELLEN (7) married A. Mathews (8)
  - MARIA (9) married E. Copeland (10)
  - LIZZIE (11)

Number in parenthesis after each name is key to biography in following pages.

JOHN OTTO RONEY I (1)

b. Holstein, Denmark, Feb. 26,1816
m. Harriet Robinson, at Thom.
d. Lost at sea, Aug. 1871

No accurate record of the early spelling of the name has been found; but his daughters believed the name was "Jan Otto van Rohnney" originally. The last name may have been Rønne, or a variation of that.

His parents are believed to have been Oliver & Christina (or Christianna ?). Maria Roney said he had a sister, Christina (or Christianna ?); & Orra Roney said there was another sister, Marie.

John went to sea as a boy to escape compulsory military service. Whether, or not, he came to the U.S. on his first voyage is unknown. He may have been a mate when he arrived in the States. The balance of his seafaring career was in East Coast schooners.

Harriet Robinson went to sea with her father, Captain Oliver Robinson. One day, when about 17, she & her cousin, Eliza Shibles (mother of Alden Mathews), went aboard Eliza's father's schooner. Harriet, possibly both girls, threw rotten apples at the mate, Harriet's future husband. All John said was, "Oh, Harriet, Harriet !" What Captain Simon Shibles said was stronger, & less tolerant.

A Bible carries this notation:
"Capt. John Ronney 1841
bought in New York 1841"

This spelling of the family name was in other books Maria Roney had. It has been said he changed to this spelling when naturalized as a U.S. citizen.

He was a very religious Methodist. "Very devout", Maria Roney told the author. Maria added that he was stern; & over six feet tall.

A search of the Thom. Town Clerk's files shows the following to be the first mention of the family name. Town Records, volume 4, page 69:
"June 16,1846. Intentions of marriage between John O. Roney and Harriet B. Robinson both of Thomaston were published by me.
Nath'l Moseryy, Town Clerk"

The same volume, page 76, notes their marriage, Aug. 13,1846.

The spelling of the name changed within the period 1841 - 1846, as shown by this record; & the last form has persisted thru the following century. Due to this evolution in spelling, no family connection is likely with the few others who spell their family name the same.

After their marriage, the couple res. at 27 Wadsworth St., Thom., in a house built by General Henry Knox for his gardner.

Sea captains of that period often had a yearning to own a chicken farm. John went beyond the dream stage: & the family went to Libertyville, Ill., about the later part of 1852. The village is about 35 miles from Chicago. The family tried a turkey farm on a plot of over 300 acres. Mrs. H. H. Grindell has the deed to the land. The 2nd & 3rd chil. were b. there during the six & a half years stay.

About the early part of 1859 drought, rheumatism, & the climate forced John to move the family to Thom. The turkeys had got wet, & all were lost. Apparently the family returned to their former home; & John sailed to the West Indies.

His daughters believed he sailed on his last voyage from Bath, as master of the schooner Ella Fish. The destination has been forgotten. The vessel, & all hands, are believed to have been lost when the cargo of lumber shifted in a gale off the South, or Southeast, coast of the U.S.

HARRIET BURNHAM ROBINSON (2)
b. Thom., Sept. 28,1826
m. John Roney I, Aug. 13,1846
d. Thom., Nov. 29,1908

A great great granddau. of Doctor Moses Robinson; & great granddau. of his son, Major Haunce Robinson, a Revolutionary War veteran; she was the oldest of 6 chil. of Captain Oliver Robinson, & Maria Matilda Shibles.

Never dressy, in later life she would tell her chil. & grandchil. to button her shoes, "Every other button is good enough". Near the turn of the century she had white hair, pink cheeks, & dainty features. She enjoyed telling her grandchil.'s fortunes in tea leaves.

She is buried in the Roney lot in Thom.

NELSON RONEY (3)

b. Thom., June 15,1848
m. Catherine Keough, at Sydney, Australia
d. Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, Aug. 25,1896

It is unlikely that Nelson had a middle name. Who he was named for is unknown.

Nelson probably went to sea in his youth. He was a ship captain; & it is believed he made voyages out of San Francisco with lumber as cargo.

He worked on a railroad in New South Wales. Captain D. P. Oliver visited him when in Sydney harbor.

Nelson was described by his sister, Maria, as six feet tall, possessing a fine singing voice, & "a big handsome fellow with a pink & white complexion".

CATHERINE VERONICA KEOUGH (4)

m. Nelson Roney, Dec. 18,1880
d. Oct. 16,1893

No picture, or data on the early life, of Catherine has been found.

Date of marriage is recorded in a family Bible as Dec. 19; but the author copied the marriage certificate, showing the date as the 18th, Nelson as "Foreman on Railway line", & Catherine as "Spinster, Windsor". Windsor is about 20 miles north of Sydney.

The couple had no chil.; & are bur. in Sydney.

JOHN OTTO RONEY II (5)

b. Thom., Mar. 17,1852
m. Cecilia Oliver, at Thom.
d. Lost at sea, Fall of 1884

Born on St. Patrick's Day, he had the fine singing voice of that generation of the Roneys; but unlike his brother, & sisters, he was not tall.

He sailed as mate under his wife's father, Captain D.P. Oliver. It is believed he made one, or more, voyages from Bath (captain of ship unknown); probably in vessels of Captain Sam Watts, the Thom. shipbuilder, owner, & master. Maude Beverage says her father's one voyage was as carpenter, with John

Roney as 2nd mate; & probably in the "J.B. Thomas".

On one of his clipper ship voyages he saw a man in Copenhagen who resembled his father. John thought the man might be a brother of his father; but, as he did not speak Danish, he did not inquire.

He sailed also in the ship Santa Clara. This vessel was built by Chapman & Flint in Bath in 1876.

Transfer to the ship St. Lucie was probably made with Captain Williams, with whom he had sailed before. The St. Lucie, like the other "Saint" vessels built in Bath, was world renowned for the smartness of her lines, hull, & rig. She did not set any speed records; but was not slow. The final voyage was from Philadelphia in Aug. 1884 for San Francisco. Three alternatives were advanced for her fate. One belief is that she burned, after being hit by lightning. Another possibility is that she was in a collision, with both ships sinking. Family tradition says the ship carried a general cargo, including railroad iron. The family believed a tidal wave, or a line gale, which occurred shortly after the vessel left port, caused the railroad iron (which had a bad reputation among sailors) to shift position & founder the ship. Maude Beverage says her father told her the ship was spoken at sea on Sept. 6.

If the vessel had reached San Francisco, John was to have assumed command for the return trip; & become a master mariner like his father & brother.

An old newspaper clipping reads:

"THOMASTON

Ship St. Lucie of Bath, Capt. John Williams, sailed from Philadelphia for San Francisco August 28, and has not yet arrived out. It is feared that she has met with serious disaster. Mr. John O. Roney of Thomaston is first officer of the vessel."

CECILIA ELIZA OLIVER (6)

b. Warren, Mar. 13,1854
m. John Roney II, Nov. 9,1878
d. Thom., Apr. 28,1922

Cecilia, generally misspelled "Cecelia", was the oldest child of Captain David Patterson Oliver; & Mary Catherine Feyler. She was b. in the first house across Oyster River on the right side of route # 131 from Thom. to Warren. The house still stands.

Although the Olivers were tall; Cecilia "took after" the Feylers, & was short. She had very black eyes; & black hair that never turned gray.

She is bur. in the Oliver lot in Thom.

ELLEN KIRKPATRICK RONEY (7)

b. Libertyville, Ill., June 6,1854
m. Alden Mathews, Sept. 17,1884
d. Lowell, Mass., Aug. 2,1937

"Ella", or "Ellie", was named for her Aunt Ellen Robinson; & her Uncle Robert Kirkpatrick. She was tall, a good cook, & had a good alto voice.

Thom. Town Report of 1885 inaccurately lists her marriage; "17 Sept. 1884. Alden H. Mathews of Lowell, Mass. & Ella M. Roney of Thomaston." Ella M. Roney was Ellen's niece - then 3 years old.

Alden & Ellen were 2nd cousins. They had no chil. She is bur. with her husband in Thom.

ALDEN HYLER MATHEWS (8)

b. Thom., Apr. 9,1856
m. Ellen Roney, at Thom.
d. Lowell, Mass., Mar. 7,1936

Isaac, Alden's father, was b. about 1829; & m. Eliza A. Shibles. Alden was a carriagesmith, & blacksmith, in Lowell; res. at 31 Winthrop St.

MARIA MATILDA RONEY (9)

b. Libertyville, Ill., Jan. 22,1858
m. Ellis Copeland, Nov. 12,1890
d. Thom., Jan. 28,1938

"Ride", or "Ridie", was named for her grandmother, Maria Matilda Shibles. Like Ellen Roney, she was tall. She was a fine singer, until the mucous membrane of her throat was burned to curb diptheria. This operation left her with a hoarse voice.

She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Order of the Eastern Star, & Thom. Garden Club.

With her husband, she is bur. in the Roney lot.

ELLIS GEORGE COPELAND (10)

b. Warren, Apr. 22,1866
m. Maria Roney, at Thom.
d. Thom., Jan. 1,1940

Ellis & Levi Garrish Copeland were b. twin sons of Rufus Boyce Copeland (Oct. 10,1830-Nov. 19,1915); & Rachel V. (Nov. 11,1828-Feb. 9,1918).

Ellis served as Selectman of Thom.; & in the State Legislature. Prior to World War I, he & his father were building contractors in Thom. During World War I, he engaged in shipbuilding in Savannah, Ga., Wilmington, Del., & Brooklyn, N.Y. Later he was a cabinetmaker for a shipyard in Thom.

LIZZIE CARLETON RONEY (11)

b. Thom., Oct. 17,1859
d. Thom., Nov. 28,1860

"Little Lizzie" was named for "Aunt Lizzie Carleton", who lived at the head of Wadsworth St., Thom. No evidence exists that the baby's first name was other than Lizzie.

She, & Catherine Keough, are the only two members of the family whose pictures the author does not have.

Lizzie d. of diptheria; & was the first bur. in the Roney lot in Thom.

ORRA SPEAR RONEY (12)

b. Thom., June 14,1879
m. Maude Beverage, at Thom.
d. Woodfords, Sept. 27,1940

He was named for Orra Spear (1840-1869), a Thom. Civil War veteran; whose wife, Martha Feyler (1834-1926), was the younger sister of Mary Catherine Feyler, & great aunt of young Orra.

Like his father, & the Feylers, Orra was small framed. A boyhood chum, Fred Russell, tagged him with the nickname "Bill" which persisted until the next generation came along to call him "Uncle Bill".

As a boy, he had an "office" in an unfinished room over that part of the Oliver Homestead containing the summer kitchen, washroom, & storeroom. This area of the house has since been remodelled. In the office he had his desk & stamp collection. His grandfather, Captain Oliver brought him stamps from his trips in square riggers. Uncle Bill later gave his stamp album to the author one Christmas. His

initials are carved & painted in numerous places in the barn of his boyhood home.

He neither went to sea, nor seemed interested in being a sailor. The family were against his following that life. The fates of his father & grandfather were fresh in his mother's mind. It had been his ambition to be a locomotive engineer; & he never lost his interest in railroading.

After 2 years at Thom. High School, he went to Bath to begin his 4 year apprenticeship as a machinist with the Hyde Windlass Co. Plans of machinery show his name, "Bath, Me.," & dates between 1900 & 1902.

In the Masons, Orra was a member of the Portland Commandry, Knights Templar. He was very proud of their uniform.

After working at Stonington with Henry Grindell, he moved to 45 Sawyer St., Woodfords; & later to the next street, 28 Mayland St. He worked as a machinist for several concerns in Portland; & was employed by Cushman's Bakery at the time of his death. He is bur. in the Beverage lot in Thom.

MAUDE AGNES BEVERAGE (13)

b. Thom., Feb. 25,1881
m. Orra Roney, Mar. 18,1908

Maude is the oldest dau. of Frank M. Beverage, a house carpenter b. in Warren (son of Thomas J. Beverage; & Deborah Taylor); & Ella Frances Hastings (dau. of Ansel V. Hastings; & Lucy Andrews).

Valedictorian of the class of 1899, Thom. High School. After graduation she was employed by the New England Telephone & Telegraph Co. to open the Thom. office. In 1904 she was Asst. Postmaster of Thom. She now res. with her dau.

ELLA MAY RONEY (14)

b. Thom. June 11,1881
m. Roderick Edgett, Apr. 8,1917

Ella May was named for her "Aunt Ella" (Ellen Roney); & her "Aunt May" (Mary Catherine Oliver, now Mrs. Mary Berg).

Grad. Thom. High School in 1900. She was clerk in Ed. Carleton's dry goods store; & later clerk in Will Vinal's store. Both stores were in Thom.

She is a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. Res. with her sister in Belmont, Mass.

RODERICK MOORE EDGETT (15)
b. Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, July 17,1891
m. Ella Roney, at Thom.
d. Belmont, Mass., June 3,1945

Gilbert E. Edgett (son of Hiram), his father, was b. in Dorchester, N.B., Canada; & was a Methodist minister. He d. Cranston, R.I., Sept. 25,1944. Mary Louise (?) Casey, Rod's mother, believed she was b. in Chelsea (London), England, in Oct. 1862. Her parents are believed to have d. of consumption when she was a baby. Mary was adopted by the Coates family in Nova Scotia; & she later res. in Moncton. She d. Rome, N.Y., Jan. 7,1941; & is bur., with husband, in Waterville.

Rod attended Belfast High School; & East Maine Conference Seminary, Bucksport. He served in the merchant marine; Canadian Militia; as a railroad stationmaster & baggagemaster; in the Coast Artillery Corps from Sept. 7,1910 to Sept. 9,1913, in the harbor defenses of Boston, Mass.; as motorcycle inspector in Springfield, Mass.; Captain of the Guards, Maine State Prison; Locomotive fireman; & as a lance corporal in the 72nd Battalion, Canadian Seaforth Highlanders, was wounded in France, Mar. 21,1918.

After the war he was an embalmer in Thom.; locomotive fireman on the Boston & Maine R.R.; salesman for several coal companies in Boston; & leased & operated several service stations in the Boston area. He is bur. in Thom.

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CECILIA MARIA RONEY (16)
b. Thom., Mar. 26,1885
m. Henry Grindell, Nov. 29,1911

Cecilia was b. in the Oliver Homestead. She is named for her mother; & her Aunt Maria Roney.

Her aunt, Mrs. Mary Berg, told how she took her, as a baby less than 2 years old, to visit Cecilia's Grandmother Roney on Wadsworth St., Thom. A storm came up; & they remained overnight. The two visitors slept together. Before Mrs. Berg went to sleep, a white form, visible from the waist up, appeared near a window, & advanced with arms folded on chest, to the bedside. The form looked at the sleeping baby before disappearing. Mrs. Berg, who was not frightened, did not tell anyone in the house; but, on returning to their home near Oyster River, she told Cecilia's mother, who said it was the baby's father returning for a look at the child he had never seen.

Grad. Thom. High School in June 1904. Prior to her marriage, she was employed as a milliner by Mrs. Edgar Daniels in Thom. With the exception of Cecilia, all

female Roneys married men younger than themselves. She res. at 50 Chester Road, Belmont 78, Mass.

HENRY HIRAM GRINDELL (17)

b. Hallowell, Mar. 10,1882
m. Cecilia Roney, at Thom.

Henry is the male form of his mother's name "Henrietta". Hiram was his father's name. At birth he was named "Hiram Henry"; but soon after the name was reversed to the present form.

His father, Hiram Leach Grindell (b. Penobscot, Dec. 31, 1840 - d. Hallowell, Dec. 4,1913), lived at 42 Winthrop St., Hallowell; & was a Civil War veteran, a member of the State Legislature, city council, city marshal, blacksmith, & master of the local Masonic lodge. Hiram's middle name was for a friend of the family's. Henrietta Leach,(Nov. 1,1843 - Aug. 14,1901), was the mother of 9 chil., of whom Henry was the youngest.

Henry met Orra Roney during his 4 year apprenticeship (Aug. 7,1899 - Aug. 1903) as a machinist with the Hyde Windlass Co. in Bath. One 4th of July they went to Orra's home in Thom., & Henry met his future wife. Henry & Orra worked as machinists at a quarry in Stonington in connection with the construction of the Manhattan Bridge, New York City.

At the time of his marriage, he was living in Charlestown, Mass., & working for the Fore River Shipbuilding Corp. in Quincy. In 1911 he became a machinist, later leadingman, in the U.S. Navy Yard, Charlestown. After World War I he was promoted to planner & estimator in the Navy Yard. During World War II he was assistant to the chief planner & estimator. In July he retired; having been with the Navy Dep't continuously from 1911 to 1946.

JEANETTE MARIE RONEY (18)

b. Thom., Jan. 28,1909
m. Ernest Pero, June 26,1937

Jeanette was named for her mother's sister, Pearl Jeanette Beverage. Marie is a modified spelling of "Maria", for her Aunt Maria Roney.

Grad. Deering High School in 1926; & grad. Univ. of Maine in 1930. Taught school in Mass. & Conn. from the Fall of 1930 to the present. Awarded M.S. degree in education from Mass. State College in June 1937. Now res. 6 South Maple St., Westfield, Mass.

ERNEST JOSEPH PERO (19)

b. Huntington, Mass., June 11,1909
m. Jeanette Roney, at Fairfield, Conn.

Son of Joseph G. Pero; & Leda Ellen Lafond. For the past 15 years he has been employed by the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co.

JOHN RONEY GRINDELL (20)

b. 47A Porter St., Somerville, Mass., Dec. 22,1913
m. Dorothea Croteau, at Belmont, Mass.

Named John Roney for his grandfather, & great grandfather; & named John Grindell for many relatives of that name. Alumnus Mass. Institute of Technology (1936); & B.S. degree from Boston Univ. (1939). Major in Infantry in World War II; & awarded Combat Infantryman Badge, & Fourragere of the Belgian Croix de Guerre, for action in Alaska & Europe.

DOROTHEA GRACE CROTEAU (21)

b. 507 First Ave., Berling, N.H., Apr. 11,1917
m. John Grindell, Mar. 19,1943

Dorothea, the eldest of 3 chil. (2. Eunice E.; 3. Beatrice M.) of John Edward Croteau (Dec. 30,1884 - Oct. 28,1927); & Mary Louisa MacKenzie, was named by choosing two pleasing names.

Res. Berlin, until move to Cranston, R.I. in 1932. Grad. (1934) of Cranston High School; & member of R.I. Honor Society. Bookkeeper for Aetna Casualty & Surety Co. in Providence. Res. with husband near numerous Army posts during World War II; & now res. with husband at 39 Paine Ave., Cranston 10, R.I.

DAVID CALVIN GRINDELL (22)

b. Charlesgate Hospital, Cambridge, Mass., Jan. 21,1919

David Patterson has been a name in his maternal ancestry for generations back to the early days of Warren, Me. Calvin was the first name of his paternal grandmother's brother.

When he was 2 months old, the family moved from 47A Porter St., Somerville, Mass., to 31 Chester Rd., Belmont, Mass.

Grad. cum laude in 1941 from Harvard Univ.; & M.A. degree from Harvard in 1942. Staff sergeant in G-2 Section, Headquarters XVI Corps in Europe during World War II. Now a civilian in the War Dep't in Historical Division, Headquarters U.S. Forces in the European Theater, Frankfurt, Germany.

PRISCILLA LEACH GRINDELL (23)

b. Hillside Hospital, Dorchester, Mass., Aug. 15,1922

Priscilla was named for the Priscilla Mullins & John Alden romance of the two Plymouth Colony pilgrims who came over on the Mayflower; & were made famous in Longfellow's poem, "The Courtship of Miles Standish". Although a Mayflower descendent, Priscilla did not descend from this couple. Leach was her paternal grandmother's family name.

Grad. Simmons College in 1944. Res. with parents; & is assistant in the office of the Director of Admissions of Simmons College. Like the Roneys, she is tall, has hazel eyes, & light brown hair.

JANE ANNE PERO (24)

b. Noble Hospital, Westfield, Mass., Nov. 12,1938

"Janie" was named for several Aunt Janes on both sides of her family. In looks & actions, she resembles her mother.

ERNESTINE PERO (25)

b. Noble Hospital, Westfield, Mass., June 26,1942

"Teenie" has no middle name. Her first name is the feminine version of her father's name. She was b. on her parent's fifth wedding anniversary.

EDWARD BEVERAGE PERO (26)

b. Noble Hospital, Westfield, Mass., Aug. 21,1944

"Ted", or "Teddy", was named for his grandfather, Orra Roney; who, it has been said, was named "Edward", for his Uncle Ed. (Edwin Oliver), until he was several months old. The middle name is the family name of his maternal grandmother. In looks, & actions, he resembles, to a marked degree, his grandfather, Orra Roney.

- E N D -